

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 SY-05 PC-01

AID-05 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCS-03

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R 041038Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5084

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABOORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3433

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SF, UK, PINT, PFOR

SUBJ: ARRESTS OF NEWSMEN

REF: PRETORIA 3367

1. ARRESTS OF NEWSMEN IN CAPE TOWN AND JOHANNESBURG REPORTED
REFTEL HAVE TAKEN ON LARGER DIMENSION AS IT TURNS OUT THAT
TWO OF THOSE ARRESTED, DAVID RABKIN AND HIS WIFE, SUSAN, ARE
BRITISH SUBJECTS. ALL SIX ARE NOW BEING HELD UNDER SECTION
SIX OF TERRORISM ACT BUT HAVE YET TO BE CHARGED. FIVE OF
DETAINEES HAVE NOW BEEN TRANSFERRED TO PRETORIA WHERE POLICE
OFFICIALS SAY THAT "INVESTIGATIONS ARE ALMOST COMPLETE".
AUTHORITIES HAVE OFFERED NO OTHER COMMENTS EXCEPT THAT
CHARGES WILL FORTHCOMING WITHIN SEVEN TO FOURTEEN DAYS
AND THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL DECIDE ON PROSECUTION.
SECURITY POLICE CHIEF GENERAL GELDENHUYS HAS TOLD PRESS
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THAT TRIALS WILL TAKE PLACE IN CAPE TOWN WHERE ONE OF

DETAINEES, ANTHONY HOLLIDAY, IS TEILL BEING HELD.

2. BRITISH SOUTH IMMEDIATE CONSULAR ACCESS TO MRS. RABKIN, WHO WAS KNOWN BRITISH CITIZEN. ALTHOUGH ARRESTS WERE MADE ON JULY 28, ACCESS WAS NOT GRANTED UNTIL AUGUST 3. THIS CAME ONLY AFTER BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID SCOTT MET ON AUGUST 2 WITH MINISTER OF JUSTICE, JIMMY KRUGER, AND HAD "TOUGH TALK". SCOTT LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HMG WAS VERY CONCERNED BY SAG'S REFUSAL TO GRANT IMMEDIATE ACCESS. HE LEFT KRUGER'S OFFICE WITH IMPRESSION THAT CHARGES WOULD BE "QUITE SERIOUS". ALTHOUGH KRUGER WAS CIRCUMSPECT ABOUT THE EXACT NATURE OF CHARGES, HE INDICATED THAT MR. RABKIN HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH PASSING LITERATURE AND INFORMATION THAT HAD SOVIET CONNECTION.

3. BRITISH EMBASSY COUNSELLOR AND CONSUL, WHO SPENT ABOUT 45 MINUTES WITH MRS. RABKIN ON AFTERNOON AUGUST 3, SAID THAT SHE WAS PHYSICALLY WELL, ALTHOUGH SHE HAD LOST A GREAT DEAL OF WEIGHT, AND WAS BEING SEEN DAILY BY A DOCTOR. THEY FELT SHE WAS QUITE DISTRESSED, HOWEVER, AND IF HELD FOR AN EXTENDED TIME, SHE MAY WELL "CRACK". THEY FEEL IT LIKELY SHE WILL ALSO BE CHARGED AND THAT THE CASE COULD TAKE MONTHS TO BRING TO TRIAL. THEREFORE, THEY ARE WORRIED ABOUT HER WELL BEING. THEY DID NOT DISCUSS CHARGES WITH HER (MEETING WAS SUPERVISED) BUT LEFT WITH FEELING THAT SHE WAS INNOCENT. THEY DID, HOWEVER, GET DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT HER HUSBAND WAS DOING SOMETHING BEYOND LEGAL BOUNDARIES.

4. ORIGINALLY THERE WAS CONFUSION OVER CITIZENSHIP OF MR. RABKIN. HE HAD AT ONE TIME HELD DUAL CITIZENSHIP AND HAD BEEN RESIDENT IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR MOST OF HIS ADULT LIFE. BRITISH DID ASK FOR CONSULAR ACCESS BUT DID NOT ORIGINALLY PURSUE IT VIGOROUSLY BECAUSE OF THIS DOUBT. IT HAS BEEN ASCERTAINED NOW, AND ACCEPTED BY SECURITY POLICE, THAT HE RENOUNCED HIS SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZENSHIP RECENTLY AND IS INDEED BRITISH. BRITISH HAVE, THEREFORE, RENEWED THEIR REQUEST FOR ACCESS WITHOUT RESULTS TO DATE.

5. COMMENT: PRESS REPORTS HERE SHOW THAT MATTER IS CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETING WITH GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION IN UK AND THERE IS SOME PUBLIC OUTCRY FOR MRS. RABKIN'S RELEASE, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE SHE IS IN ADVANCED STAGE OF PREGNANCY. BRITISH ARE THEREFORE UNDER SOME PUBLIC PRESSURE TO PURSUE MATTER. HOWEVER, MORE IMPORTANT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCESS, WHICH BRITISH HAVE BEEN AGGRESSIVELY PRESSING ON SAG. EMBASSY IS KEEPING IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH BRITISH EFFORTS ON THIS MATTER AS IT COULD WELL LAY PRECEDENT SHOULD

WE EVER BE FACED WITH SIMILAR CASES WITH AMCITS.
BOWDLER

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